

A review of the type material of the Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis*

by Nigel Cleere

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The Neotropical Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis* von Humboldt, 1817 is the sole member of the family Steatornithidae, which is placed either within the Caprimulgiformes (e.g. Peters 1940, Cleere 1998, Thomas 1999, Holyoak 2001) or the Strigiformes (e.g. Sibley *et al.* 1988, Sibley & Ahlquist 1990, Sibley & Monroe 1990). Described from Caripe caves in north-east Venezuela by von Humboldt (1814), it has long been regarded as a monotypic species, although a smaller, southern race was described from northern and central Peru by Taczanowski (1884). The Peruvian form was subsequently found to be indistinguishable from birds from Trinidad and from Bogotá trade skins (Zimmer 1930).

The species has been reasonably well studied since its discovery (e.g. Snow 1961, 1962, Roca 1994), but little has been published on its taxonomy or nomenclature, and the only recent data appears to be my own (Cleere 2002). Here, I now comment on the Oilbird's type material.

Materials and methods

I visited most of the major natural history museums in Europe and North America and carefully examined all Oilbird specimens. I also compared their data with the literature, museum registers and archive material where available.

Results and discussion

Steatornis caripensis was described from the Caripe caves in north-east Venezuela by von Humboldt (1814), who mentioned that two birds were obtained by his colleague, A. Bonpland, on or shortly after 18 September 1799. Presumably, these two would eventually have been regarded as types, but following collection their whereabouts remained a mystery for several years. The earliest report on the fate of these specimens appears to have been that of L'Herminier (1834), who revealed that having been dispatched to Europe, they were lost in a shipwreck off the coast of West Africa in 1801.

Since its discovery, only one other form of Oilbird has been described, named *Steatornis caripensis*, var. *peruviana* by Taczanowski (1884), who presented a full account of birds found in northern and central Peru (see below), and also highlighted plumage differences compared to Venezuelan birds. No type data were given, but localities where the new race was said to occur were listed as Tingo Maria, dpto. Huánuco (Raimondi), Cajamarca and Pumamarca, dpto. Junin (Jelski), Ninabamba and Querocotillo, dpto. Cajamarca (Stolzmann) and la vallée

Huayabamba, dpto. Amazonas (Stolzmann). (Names in brackets refer to those persons who supplied information or specimens to the author, who never travelled to Peru himself.) Supporting the description of this new Oilbird was a series of notes on the habits of this species at Ninabamba, written by J. Stolzmann. In one passage, Stolzmann refers to an incident in which 60 shots were fired to bring down 11 birds, although not all were recovered and the precise number preserved as museum specimens was not given. The specimens were initially sent to the Zoological Cabinet in Warsaw, Poland, which was formerly part of the Royal University of Warsaw, and then later to the Branickis' collection, also in Poland (Kazubski 1996). However, prior to their transfer to the Branickis' collection, one specimen had already been sent to Count Berlepsch's collection in Germany (see below). The Branickis' collection was subsequently transferred to the Museum and Institute of Zoology in Warsaw, Poland (MZPW), and the Berlepsch collection to the Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (SMF). No data on specimens collected at the other localities were given.

Prior to his description of the Oilbird found in Peru, Taczanowski published two short accounts of the material collected (see above). In the first, he confirmed that several specimens had been collected on 4 July 1879 in a cave situated at 7,100 ft (c.2,160 m), at Ninabamba, Chota province, Santa Cruz district, in dpto. Cajamarca, on the west slope of the Andes (Taczanowski 1880). In the second, he simply recorded that two specimens were collected in February 1880 at Huambo (Taczanowski 1882).

The first documentation of the type material of *Steatornis caripensis peruvianus* was by Taczanowski (1889). In this work, the author listed as types a male and female labelled 10878 (an old catalogue number?), and referred to two other specimens not included in the inventory, but obtained by Stolzmann in Ninabamba and Huambo. In a later type catalogue of birds in the Museum and Institute of Zoology in Warsaw, Poland, only one specimen was listed (Sztolcman & Domaniewski 1927). This was recorded as MZPW P.2300, an adult male collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, north-east Peru, by J. Stolzmann, which can now be accepted as an act of lectotypification under the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) (1999) art. 74.1. The specimen is recorded as the type on the museum index card, although the writing differs to that on the museum label.

A second specimen housed in the Museum and Institute of Zoology in Warsaw, Poland is recorded as a co-type, a term no longer recognised by the ICZN. This specimen is unregistered (=MZPW 1453?), and is an unsexed bird collected 24 February 1880 at Huambo, Peru, by J. Stolzmann. Although regarded as a co-type on the museum index card, the entry is in a different ink and handwriting to the type, and was possibly added to the museum records at a later date. A third specimen present in the Museum and Institute of Zoology in Warsaw, Poland, but not recorded as a type in the museum's records, is MZPW 23912, an adult female also collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, north-east Peru, by J. Stolzmann. This

specimen appears to have been registered on the museum index card at the same time as the lectotype (i.e. same handwriting) and is probably a paralectotype. A fourth specimen in the Museum and Institute of Zoology in Warsaw, Poland, is MZPW 23914, an undated adult female collected at Huambo by J. Stolzmann. This specimen was formerly in the Branickis' collection, where it had a collection number 924c and was labelled as a type. I believe that these four specimens are the ones referred to by Taczanowski (1889).

In the Forschungsinstitut und Naturmuseum Senckenberg, Frankfurt am Main, Germany (SMF), there is a specimen that was formerly in the Berlepsch collection, which he received from Taczanowski in Warsaw in October 1880. This specimen is registered as SMF 29967, and is an adult male collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, north-east Peru, by J. Stolzmann. Although this specimen was sent to Germany prior to the description of the Peruvian Oilbird and its types were published, it was clearly part of the original series used to establish the new form, and I therefore have no hesitation in accepting that it is probably also a paralectotype. As a result of my investigations, I believe that the synonymy and types of the Oilbird may be given as follows.

Steatornis von Humboldt, 1814

Steatornis von Humboldt F. H. A., 1814, in von Humboldt F. H. A. & Bonpland A. J. A., *Voy. Nouv. Cont.* Pt. 1, Vol. 1, p. 416.

For citation, see Cleere, N. 2002, *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 122, p. 71.

Type, by monotypy, 'Guacharo' = *Steatornis caripensis* von Humboldt F. H. A. 1817.

Steatornis caripensis von Humboldt, 1817

Steatornis caripensis von Humboldt F. H. A., 1817, *Bull. Sci. Soc. Philom. Paris*, p. 52.

Two probable syntypes collected c.18 September 1799 at Caripe cave, Monagas, north-east Venezuela by A. Bonpland. Lost at sea off the coast of western Africa in 1801, see L'Herminier 1834, p. 321.

Nyctibius steatornis Stephens J. F., 1826, in Shaw G., *Gen. Zool.* 13, Pt. 2, Aves.

Published as *Ny ? steatornis*, a new name for the erroneous *Caprimulgus steatornis* Humboldt.

For date of publication, see Mathews G. M. 1919, *Birds of Australia*, vol. 7, p. 467.

Steatornis caripensis peruvianus Taczanowski L., 1884, *Orn. Pérou*, vol. 1, p. 199.

Published as *Steatornis caripensis*, var. *peruviana*, but see ICZN (1999) Art. 30.1.2 and Art. 45.6.4.

Lectotype MZPW unregistered, adult male, relaxed mount, collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, Cajamarca, Peru, 7,100 ft (c.2,160 m), by J. Stolzmann. Old museum no. MZPW 2300 P. For lectotypification, see Sztolcman & Domaniewski 1927, p. 107.

Paralectotype MZPW 23912, adult female, relaxed mount, collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, Cajamarca, Peru, 7,100 ft (c.2,160 m), by J. Stolzmann.

Paralectotype SMF 29967, adult male, collected 4 July 1879 at Ninabamba, Cajamarca, Peru, 7,100 ft (c.2,160 m), by J. Stolzmann. Ex Berlepsch collection—received October 1880 from L. Taczanowski in Warsaw.

Paralectotype MZPW unregistered (=MZPW 1453?), adult, collected 24 February 1880 at Huambo, Amazonas, Peru, by J. Stolzmann.

Paralectotype MZPW 23914, adult female, collected February 1880 (probably on 24th) at Huambo, Amazonas, Peru, by J. Stolzmann. Ex Branickis' collection no. 924c.

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Two unreported specimens of Ochre-breasted Pipit *Anthus nattereri* from a new Brazilian locality

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Ochre-breasted Pipit *Anthus nattereri* is a rare species of grassland and open, low *cerrado* in southern Brazil, eastern Paraguay and north-east Argentina (Collar *et al.* 1992, Ridgely & Tudor 1989). BirdLife International (2000) classified the species as Vulnerable because of range reduction associated with habitat destruction and changes in fire and grazing regimes (see Parker & Willis 1997). Collar *et al.* (1992) listed just 18 historical localities in Brazil for this pipit, although recent research has yielded a few additional sites (e.g. Silveira 1998).

We describe here two unreported male specimens from the bird collection of the Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH), Chicago, USA, collected by Emmet R.